



Foster Care Review Board Facilitator Handbook

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Contents

RESOURCES	3
PREPARATION FOR REVIEWS	3
FACILITATING THE MEETING	4
TAKING TESTIMONY	6
FOLLOW UP	7
GENERAL INFORMATION	8
FACILITATOR INVOICE AND PAYMENT	9
DELIVERY OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING	11
ELECTION OF FCRB CHAIRPERSON / VICE-CHAIRPERSON	12
FACILITATOR EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK	13
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	13

This handbook is provided as a framework for the tasks of a Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) Facilitator with the Iowa Child Advocacy Board (ICAB). It is Appendix 1 of the FCRB Policy & Procedure Manual. Additional information regarding the ICAB, FCRB and other resource information is noted on the final page.

RESOURCES

The **FCRB Facilitator Handbook** resources are located on the ICAB Website at <https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov/fcrb-policies-and-procedures> .

Many tasks associated with facilitation are outlined below. This information is provided to give guidance and a framework to the Facilitator. A Facilitator with the ICAB is subject to the requirements of the contract.

PREPARATION FOR REVIEWS

1. The ICAB supplies materials needed to conduct an FCRB meeting, including FCRB Report templates (**Resources 32a, b and c**) and other form templates, meeting agenda, and access to confidential case files. The Facilitator will retrieve confidential case file information from the Shared Google Drive (Resource 45). Each FCRB is supported by a Local Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant (AA) with whom the Facilitator will interact to fulfill the duties. The Facilitator assumes responsibility for the appropriate care and use of state-issued equipment/materials. Notify the AA when additional supplies are needed.
2. It is paramount for the Facilitator to be present for all FCRB meetings, and to prioritize the work of the FCRB review day over other interests. It is expected that the Facilitator will schedule vacations and other time off to not interfere with FCRB meetings, as any absences from a review meeting would create a hardship for Board Members, families, and ICAB staff.
 - a. If a situation arises wherein the Facilitator must be absent, efforts will be made to hold the meeting with either the Local Coordinator or perhaps another Facilitator as the substitute. An emergency back-up facilitator plan has been developed for the local boards.
3. Facilitator absences:
 - a. Unanticipated absence: If a Facilitator has a last-minute emergency arise which will require the Facilitator to either be late for the meeting or absent from the meeting altogether, it is imperative that the Local Coordinator and AA be informed by direct phone contact as soon as possible. Arrangements will need to be made to provide the draft FCRB Reports to the Local Coordinator and AA. Depending on availability of a substitute, the meeting start time may need to be delayed or the meeting day cancelled altogether.
 - b. Anticipated absence: If a Facilitator must be absent due to a known situation such as a funeral, the Local Coordinator is to be informed by direct phone contact as soon as the conflict is known, so that options/arrangements can be discussed.

4. Meetings of FCRBs are scheduled in advance, and historically have been determined to be either full-day or half-day events based on the available foster care population. The boards are either single or multi-county. In locations where the review of all foster youth is not possible due to limited resources, selected populations to review were determined in consultation with the local courts and Department of Human Services (DHS). The AA will email the FCRB meeting agenda to the Facilitator approximately 30 days prior to the meeting, which lists the youth to prepare for by accessing case documents from Google Drive. Review the available case documents to become thoroughly familiar with the case. Frequently, additional documents will arrive at ICAB after the case files have been mailed or delivered to Board Members. This requires the AA to provide a “second mailing” of documents to the Board Members, and to notify the Facilitator of the specific, new documents to access on Google Drive.
5. Prior to the meeting day, complete a **draft** FCRB Report for each slot or youth (See Resource 54: FCRB Process and Report Writing Guide). For previously reviewed youth, the prior report may be used as a guide; **however, it is imperative that dates are updated throughout the report, Findings and Interested Parties notified of the review are updated from the prior review.** Complete as much information as possible based on the documents available. Be sure that drafts are ready (hardcopy or on computer) for use at the meeting. During the child’s review, information will be added or changed to the draft, based upon testimony. At the conclusion of the review, specific information in the draft copy is read aloud by the Facilitator, to assure that the testimony was captured accurately and that all required areas of discussion and the legal findings have been addressed.
6. Testimony at a child’s review may be verbal, written, or from a recording. The Facilitator may be required to read letters or faxed reports, or play recorded statements during the review.
 - a. **Note:** If a foster home is sequestered for the child’s safety [per DHS, documentations or other information], foster family members are introduced and referred to by first name only, both at the meeting and in the FCRB Report. It is important to preview all recordings / faxed reports provided for testimony, and to delete any reference to the family surname prior to presentation at a review.
7. The Facilitator is to arrive at the meeting site in adequate time to prepare for the meeting. Pre-meeting tasks may include making coffee, placing signs, arranging the meeting room and waiting area, greeting the arriving Board Members, and checking for messages.

FACILITATING THE MEETING

1. A meeting quorum consists of 3 Board Members. *In the event that only two Board Members are able to participate in a review, the Facilitator will announce to the Interested Parties (IPs, who are persons with legal standing for the child) that a quorum is not present, but that testimony will be taken and any recommendations made by the FCRB are tentative until discussed and approved by at least one additional Board Member.* [In the event that only one or no Board Members are available for a review, the Facilitator will inform IPs in attendance of the situation, apologize for the inconvenience, and inform that the review will be rescheduled. The Facilitator will make immediate direct

phone contact the AA or Local Coordinator of the lack of Board Members in attendance, so that steps can be taken to either achieve adequate numbers of Board Members for the meeting or cancel the remainder of the reviews].

2. The meeting begins with Administrative Business. It is important to close the meeting room door to assure privacy/confidentiality. Administrative Business may include announcements, discussion of the agenda, anticipated absences, updates, assuring that Lead Questioner (LQ) duties for any absent Board Members are reassigned to a present Board Member [generally the Chairperson], and determining conflicts of interest that may have been noted by Board Members. If a conflict exists on a case the Facilitator will ask for the Board Member to step out during the review.
3. Previewing the first case of the day immediately follows with the LQ sharing information to the Board Members from the LQ Worksheet (Resource 29a). The information is to familiarize the Board Members with the case particulars. The Worksheet information is to be largely completed by the LQ from information in the case file materials. As additional or corrected information comes from testimony, the LQ updates the Worksheet. The Facilitator also distributes any late-arriving written information regarding the pending review, and alerts the Board Members to any recorded reports to be played during the review.
4. The Facilitator goes to the waiting area to greet the IPs. A list of the IPs and their relationship to the child is provided to the Facilitator by the AA. It is advisable for the Facilitator to take the list along to the waiting area, to identify the IPs present. **Ask the DHS caseworker to verify the information on the IP list (update incorrect addresses, add missing parties, note parties that are no longer involved and need to be removed from the notification list).** It is general practice to then return to the meeting room to inform the Board which IPs are present. Any special considerations (eg, taking testimony of estranged parents separately) should be determined in advance. As a precaution, a plan is to be developed between the Facilitator and FCRB Chairperson(s) to deal with situations in which “No Contact” Orders are in force, to keep the parties separated before, during and following the review event in so much as possible.
5. For a person *without* legal standing (eg. legislator, minister, friend) to participate in the meeting, the following must occur:
 - a. all IPs in attendance must agree to the participation and complete the FCRB Release Form (Resource 39), and
 - b. the person without legal standing must complete the FCRB Confidentiality Form (Resource 40)
6. If all IPs present do not agree with the participation, the Facilitator will consult with the Chairperson. If it appears that the person has information of value for the child’s review, the Board may choose to hear that persons’ testimony by bringing all parties into the meeting at the same time, then explaining that the person in question has a statement to make regarding the foster child(ren). The person is then given a few minutes to state their information, but no questions are taken nor any confidential information discussed in their presence. Once the person leaves the room, the review begins. Interested Parties/Board Members may then choose to discuss the previous testimony, and it may be referenced in the “read back” and FCRB Report.

7. A successful review is respectful, includes all mandated FCRB Report elements, and is focused on child safety, permanency, and outcomes. It can be significantly enhanced by the tone created during the initial contact with the IPs.
8. When the Board Members are ready, the Facilitator escorts the IPs to the room. Once all participants are seated for the meeting, the Facilitator introduces the IPs by name and relationship to the foster child. Next, the Facilitator insures that introductions of all attendees are made. During introductions, the Facilitator and Board Members model the behaviors of respect, attentiveness, and courtesy expected of all participants. The Chairperson will read the Chair Announcement to Interested Parties (Resource 30). The Chairperson then turns to the LQ to begin the child's review process.

TAKING TESTIMONY

1. The focus of the review is on the DOMAIN AREAs Needs [N], which are located in section "B" of the Case Permanency Plan. The LQ will proceed by using the LQ Worksheet.

NOTE: If the child and/or parents are present, testimony is taken from them first. If the testimony moves to topics that are potentially damaging or concerning for the child, the Facilitator or a Board Member will determine if the child should be present; the Facilitator will assure that steps are taken for the child to remain accompanied if removed from the review meeting.

2. The Facilitator will have readied any recorded testimony or letters, which are introduced into testimony prior to discussion of the first DOMAIN AREA Needs [N]. The Facilitator's responsibilities include taking notes for the "read back" for use in the written FCRB Report, and helping to guide the review session so that it is completed in a timely fashion. **The Facilitator assures that all DOMAIN AREA Needs [N] are addressed.** Prompt Board Members to ask questions for any remaining domain areas. It is important that each IP is given the opportunity to discuss issues and to provide input.
3. Occasionally the complexity of issues/testimony causes the review meeting to run behind the scheduled agenda. If so it is important for the Facilitator or a Board Member to step to the waiting area and inform the IPs who have gathered for the next review. Adjustments in the length of scheduled breaks or lunchtime may be needed to again return to schedule.
4. Following the testimony time, the Facilitator provides the "read back" of testimony from the draft FCRB Report. **The read back is to be organized and arranged by DOMAIN AREA.** Any corrections or clarifications by the IPs or Board Members are to be noted in the draft FCRB Report.
5. If applicable, the Facilitator next reads back any Recommendations from the child's previous final FCRB Report, and asks the IPs for a status update. Depending on the information received, the Facilitator will ask the Board whether label the prior recommendation as "Achieved", "Not Achieved", "Ongoing" or "No longer applicable".

6. The Facilitator states “The permanency goal for this child is (goal) by (date). Does the FCRB support this goal?” If the majority answers “no”, determine why and include the preferred goal on the draft FCRB Report. Next the Facilitator asks the Board Members for any Recommendations for DHS, or for anyone else associated with the case. Recommendations are written into the draft FCRB Report. See Resource 42 for suggested wording for recommendations.
7. The review is concluded with the Chairperson and/or Facilitator thanking the IPs for coming to the review. The Facilitator escorts the IPs from the room, handing each a Comment Card (Resource 25) to complete and to place in the envelope located in the waiting area. The Facilitator returns to the meeting, and the Board focuses attention on the next agenda item.
8. The above process is repeated through the final case. At the time designated on the agenda for Board Training, the Facilitator will deliver the in-service training which has been prepared by the Local Coordinator for that meeting. The Facilitator will be thoroughly familiar with the material to maximize the learning opportunity for the Board Members.
9. After the final review, the Facilitator administrative tasks include:
 - a. Retrieving the Comment Cards. The Chairperson will read the results to the Board Members.
 - b. Assuring that forms including FCRB Hours and Miles Tracking Sheet (Resource 27), Chair Meeting Summary (Resource 24) and Facilitator Meeting Summary (Resource 26) are fully completed
 - c. Handing out the confidential file information to the Board Members for the next meeting [local protocol may vary]
 - d. Assisting in any needed reassignment of LQs for the next scheduled meeting
 - e. Placing all case materials in the appropriate case files for return to the AA in an organized manner
 - f. Collecting any case materials for shredding
 - g. Thanking the Board Members for their volunteer service
10. Following adjournment of the meeting, the Facilitator re-sets the room to its previous condition (local protocol may vary). Tasks include gathering signs, returning any keys and alerting facility staff that you are leaving the building.

BOARD FOLLOW UP

1. It is extremely important to make the Local Coordinator immediately aware of any special occurrences or concerns that a Facilitator may have from the meeting. The Facilitator may “debrief” with the Local Coordinator by phone, e-mail or in person. The Facilitator Summary form is used to report routine information. The Facilitator is responsible to assure safe return of confidential documents, forms and materials to the AA.
2. The FCRB Reports are submitted (using the supplied ICAB header and local footer) by email to the designated CAB editor by email within 5 calendar days following the meeting for contracted facilitators. Volunteer and staff facilitators have five working days

to submit the reports by email to the designated CAB editor. **Expectations for completion of the FCRB Report are located in *FCRB Report Essentials*, Resource 43 and Resource 54: Process and Report Writing Guide.** The designated CAB editor will proofread/edit the FCRB Reports within 2 working days, and the Facilitator will email the final, corrected FCRB Report to the AA within 12 calendar days following the meeting.

3. Assure that any contact information changes regarding IPs that is discovered during the review day is included in the Facilitator Summary so that the FCRB database can be updated.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Appearing before a FCRB can be an intimidating experience, especially for a foster child and family members. Emotions can run high, and feelings of vulnerability and hostility are occasionally expressed. The Facilitator must remain alert to the emotional states of IPs, and intervene as appropriate.
2. Dealing with threats, violence or other safety concerns. Sometimes written reports or other information supplied by DHS or other sources indicates that a person or persons invited to participate in a child's review has a past history of violence. In such instances, it is prudent for the Local Coordinator to consult with the Facilitator and the Chairperson to determine whether to alert local law enforcement of the time and location of the review, for quick intervention if needed.
 - a. Occasionally a review situation may produce an overt or perceived threat to the welfare of persons involved in the review setting. Threatening or violent behavior is not to be tolerated. The Facilitator is to inform the person of the need to demonstrate control of their behaviors; if that is not workable, the person can be dismissed from the review, or the review cancelled altogether.
 - b. Safety is a primary concern for all participants, and prudent action by the Facilitator and Board Members is expected. Devising a safety plan in advance (eg, arrangement of the room to allow unobstructed exit, available cell phone for dialing 911) is advised.
 - c. A weapons policy and board safety policy have been added to the FCRB Program and FCRB Member P&P manuals. The manual is available at <https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov/fcrb-policies-and-procedures>.
3. Building rapport with the Board Members, caseworkers, foster families, agency representatives, attorneys, and others is essential to successful facilitation. Lunchtime and breaks offer opportunities to engage Board Members. It is important to acknowledge their efforts with sincere appreciation for their service.
4. If an expected DHS caseworker has not arrived timely for the start of a review, it is advisable to call the DHS office to determine the reason. In consultation with the Chairperson, a decision is then made whether to continue, delay, or reschedule the review. Factors to consider include other IPs present, completeness of CPP, and the status of the case.

5. During the review meeting day, it is important to assure that confidential case material is protected at all times. During lunchtime or any breaks away from the meeting room, lock the room or take other measures to maintain confidentiality.
6. Occasionally, inclement weather or meeting facility issues will arise.
 - a. Cancellation of FCRB meetings, due to inclement weather.
 - i. For weather-related issues, the Local Coordinator will consult with the Facilitator and Chairperson to make a determination about delaying or canceling an FCRB meeting day.
 - ii. If a change is determined to be necessary, the Local Coordinator will inform the AA who will immediately notify the Board Members and IPs about the delay/cancellation.
 - iii. The Local Coordinator/AA will also notify the meeting facility about the cancellation.
 - b. Cancellation of FCRB meetings due to meeting facility issues.
 - i. If the facility used for the FCRB meeting is closed on the day of the meeting with little notice, the Facilitator will consult with the Local Coordinator to determine whether another convenient, alternate facility is available. If no facility is available, the
 - ii. Facilitator will notify the Board Chairperson and the FCRB meeting will be cancelled.
 - iii. Local Coordinator will inform the AA who will immediately notify the Board Members and the IPs about the cancellation.
 - c. Rescheduling a cancelled FCRB meeting.
 - i. When a meeting day is cancelled, the Local Coordinator will determine a new date for the reviews to be held after checking with the Board Members, meeting location and Facilitator about availability. The Local Coordinator will notify the AA of the new date.

FACILITATOR INVOICE AND PAYMENT

1. The AA will complete and email to the Facilitator the Facilitator Invoice (Resource 23) based on the meeting agenda and/or other activities to be compensated. The form is divided into 3 sections:
 - a. Youth Reviewed
 - b. Review Day Board Support / Consultation Services
 - c. Travel Payment

The form will calculate the payment based on information input to reflect activity. The goal for each board meeting is to have a full complement of slots, which is 4 per half-day board and 7 per full-day board. If the number of filled slots is increased or decreased due to the particular circumstances of the day, the AA will consult with the Local Coordinator, and the Facilitator will be informed via the agenda. Each timeslot will be paid at the specified rate regardless of the number of reports that are required for that timeslot.

- \$50 for a regular case review slot
- \$40 for a TPR case review slot
- \$40 for an APPLA case review slot

In addition, the Facilitator will be paid \$40.00 for each meeting day for such tasks as room preparation, delivery of training, gathering files, collecting data, etc. Facilitators will be reimbursed at the rate of \$.39 / mile round trip from their domicile to the meeting site.

2. **Slots.** Slots for reviews will be determined by the AA, with input from the Local Coordinator as needed. Typically, a slot will be 40 minutes in length, but may vary due to: complexity of the case; number of siblings in the slot; 1st time review; approaching permanency hearing; history of IP attendance, etc. Input from the Board Members, based on knowledge of the case via past reviews will also be taken into consideration. Generally:
 - a. for each child/sibling group differentiated by multiple involved fathers or step/mothers, confidentiality is a special concern. It is important to assure that only information that is legally available for a parent is discussed in their presence. This may require a review slot to be divided, bringing in parents separately to provide their testimony and writing separate reports for each set of parents. Allowing extra slot time on the agenda for such situations is warranted. Alternately, the AA may, in consultation with the Local Coordinator and Board Members, choose to have the child/sibling group placed into separate time slots and require separate reports.
 - b. Youth 14 years and older will be scheduled for an individual review if time allows on the agenda; all youth 14 and older need to have their own report due to confidentiality issues (younger sibling information cannot be contained in the older sibling's report). If time does not allow for individual reviews, sibling groups with children aged both under and over age 14 will be reviewed in the same slot; however a child over age 14 will be provided a separate report from any siblings.
 - c. siblings under age 14 in different levels of care (eg, foster home, institution, etc) will be reviewed in the same slot, and can be included in the same FCRB Report.
 - d. Individual youth/sibling cases in which the court has issued a "No Contact" order between parents will require separate slots and separate FCRB Reports that reflect only information related to the specific parent;
 - e. If the "No Contact" order is between the child and parent(s), a review slot will be scheduled for the youth separate from the parents. DHS, GAL, FSRP, placement and any provider working with the child will be invited to the child's review. When a case has a no contact order between the child and parent(s), the AA shall consult with the FCRB Program Manager for scheduling and report distribution. Note: the agenda may include a time buffer between reviews where no contact is ordered.
3. The Facilitator will return the FCRB case files, summaries/forms, Comment Cards, and the completed and signed Facilitator Invoice to the AA following the FCRB meeting within five working days. Upon receipt of the post-review board materials and the designated CAB editor-approved FCRB Reports for filing/distribution, the AA will initial the invoice and mail it to the State Office AA for processing. When a Facilitator resides or facilitates in the town where the FCRB office is located, Board Member files will be

dropped off no later than 5 calendar days post-review. When a Facilitator does not reside in the town where the FCRB office is located, Board Member files will be shipped to and from the Facilitator. The AA will consult with the Facilitator to have the box of returning Board Member files picked up by UPS (Resource 36) to discuss any special instructions for the pick-up location or time.

Note: The State of Iowa pays all authorized claims within 60 days of receipt by the Department of Administrative Services. Note: Facilitator Invoices cannot have claims which span different fiscal years.

4. If the Facilitator fails to submit FCRB Reports, forms or other requirements from a FCRB meeting in a timely and accurately manner, the Facilitator Invoice for that meeting will be held by the AA until such time as the requirements are fully met. Any questions/concerns from the Facilitator with regard to invoice pay are to be directed to the Local Coordinator.
5. Occasionally the Facilitator will be required to attend orientation or other meetings for ICAB (separate from the facilitation of FCRB meetings) which are listed under Consultation Services on the Facilitator Invoice. The Facilitator will be paid at the rate of \$20.00/hr for the number of hours on the agenda. Travel is compensated at \$.39/mile round trip from their domicile. Again, the Facilitator will be required to sign the Invoice. Note: The AA may choose to add the Consultation Services to a Facilitator Invoice prepared for submission for a FCRB meeting, to reduce paperwork/steps. Travel time for meetings is not compensated.
6. FCRB In-Service Training. Six hours of in-service training is required for each Board Member annually. Training will be built into the schedules to meet this minimum, and held at such times as most workable for the ICAB and the Board Members (such as in conjunction with a lunch break). **Training materials are provided by the State Training Specialist and/or the Deputy Program Administrator for FCRB;** the AA will copy any needed materials for distribution to the Board Members and Facilitator and build the time into the agenda; and the Facilitator will deliver the training.
7. If a filled slot on the agenda is cancelled within 5 calendar days of the FCRB meeting, the Facilitator will be paid \$25.00 for preparation/time and inconvenience. If an FCRB meeting day is cancelled due to weather or other emergency and is not rescheduled, the Facilitator will be paid at a rate of \$25.00 per filled agenda slot to compensate for preparation/time and inconvenience. The Facilitator will not be compensated for Review Day Board Support for cancelled meeting days, but may be paid for mileage to return case files, etc as may be required

DELIVERY OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1. Facilitators are required by contract to deliver in-service training to Board Members when scheduled on the board day agenda.
2. For each board day, facilitators receive \$40 payment for administrative tasks which includes delivering training when scheduled.

3. Foster Care Review Board Members are required to receive and complete 6 hours of ongoing training each calendar year.
4. The ICAB Training Specialist and planning team have developed an annual training calendar to provide consistent training to all Board Members statewide. Therefore, facilitators who work with multiple coordinators and boards will have the same training to deliver to the boards.
5. ICAB staff members are working hard to develop training materials that clearly outline the learning objectives or outcomes, provide guidance on how to deliver the content and how the content is applied to the role of the Board Member. Each training ends with an evaluation that participants complete and facilitators return to the local FCRB office/AA within five business days following a review day for further processing.
6. If you identify specific training needs of the board or individual members, include notes on the Facilitator Meeting Summary so staff can assess and plan accordingly.
7. Training topics will take from 30 – 60 minutes to deliver to Board Members. Local Coordinators and Administrative Assistants will schedule trainings accordingly to fit with the board schedule taking into consideration boards that meet every other month versus monthly.

ELECTION OF FCRB CHAIRPERSON / VICE-CHAIRPERSON

1. Annually (generally during December) every FCRB will hold an election for the positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The Facilitator is to preside over the election process. Below is a suggested format.
2. The Facilitator distributes the position descriptions of Chair/Co-Chair Responsibilities (Resource 47) and reads aloud the following:
3. Foster Care Review Boards hold an election each year, to allow for a change in the leadership of local boards. Today you will be asked to vote to elect a Chairperson and a Vice – Chairperson. The newly elected leaders will take over at the beginning of the next FCRB meeting. It is not required that the present leadership be removed, but holding the election allows for change.
 - Ask that any Board Member unwilling to serve make that known before voting.
 - Pass out paper “ballots” [eg, post-it notes].
 - Ask the Board Members to write one name only. The most-named Board Member will be the Chairperson, 2nd most-named will be the Vice-Chairperson. The Facilitator tallies the votes, and announces the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Determine a tie-breaker if necessary.
4. Include the results in the Facilitator Meeting Summary form.

FACILITATOR EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

It is important for the Facilitator to meet the needs of the Board Members and to complete the requirements in the contract with ICAB. To assist with this process, evaluations will be completed at least annually, and more often as desired by ICAB. The forms used to help compile information are the Board Member Assessment of Facilitator Services (Resource 34) and the Staff Assessment of Facilitator Services (Resource 35). Results will be shared with the Facilitator by the Local Coordinator. This is intended to help maximize performance and satisfaction with the services under contract.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. FCRB Program Policy and Procedures Manual is also available at <https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov/fcrb-policies-and-procedures>
2. Iowa Department of Human Services operating procedures are located at <http://dhs.iowa.gov/policy-manuals> The Policy Manuals link provides instructions for DHS employees and vendors under contract to DHS on the administration of DHS programs
3. Code of Iowa chapter 237.15 and following speaks to FCRB requirements